

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED

EO 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PBOR, BT, UK, BH

SUBJECT: BELIZE

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1. BELIZE WAS ONE OF TOPICS I DISCUSSED WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ROEL MORNING NOVEMBER 17. WE COVERED A NUMBER OF ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM.

2. AT END OF OUR CONVERSATION, ROEL WAS LEAVING FOR MEETING AT SECRETARIAT OF DEFENSE, AT WHICH HE EXPECTED PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S PRESENCE, TO ASSESS GUATEMALAN MILITARY INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES REGARDING BELIZE. HE WAS UNSPECIFIC ABOUT WHETHER FOCUS WAS TO BE GUATEMALA-N-BELIZE OR ALSO GUATEMALAN-MEXICAN SITUATION, BUT I ASSUME BOTH. (BRITISH EMBASSY TELLS US THAT ROEL IN NOVEMBER 16 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR COX COMMENTED THAT GUATEMALAN AIR FORCE ALREADY WAS STRONGER THAN MEXICAN AIR FORCE. ROEL ALSO MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES HIS CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBILITY ISRAELIS WOULD SELL HIGH-PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT TO GUATEMALA.)

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3. ROEL CHARGED THAT THE UK'S UNDESIRABLE HASTE TO GET OUT OF BELIZE CAUSES THEM TO SQUEEZE BELIZE INTO TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. (AGAIN, THIS TOPIC CAME UP IN HIS LAST CONVERSATION WITH COX, WHO ASSURED HIM UK HAD NO INTENTION OF WITHDRAWING ITS FORCES IN SHORT RUN BUT MADE POINT THAT BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION UNLIKELY TO COUNTENANCE MAINTAINING ITS MILITARY PRESENCE OVER LONG TERM, ESPEC-

ALLY AFTER INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN GRANTED.)

4. HE SHOWED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE CUBAN INTERVENTION, SAYING IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE IF GUATEMALA MOVED MILITARILY AGAINST BELIZE AND CUBA APPEARED ON SCENE AS SAVIOU OF A BELEGUERED BELIZEAN PEOPLE. (BRITISH EMBASSY SAYS ROEL TALKED TO COX ABOUT DANGERS OF "ANGOLIZATION" AND REFERRED TO BELIZE AS A MIDDLE EAST TYPE CONFLICT DEVELOPING ON MEXICO'S SOUTHERN FRONTIER.) ROEL, HOWEVER, DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PROMPT SETTLEMENT WITH TERRITORIAL CESSION MIGHT BE BEST WAY TO REDUCE RISK OF GIVING CASTRO AN ENTREE.

5. ON TERRITORIAL CESSION, I FOUND ROEL SOMEWHAT MORE FLEXIBLE THAN COX DID IN HIS NOVEMBER 14 CONVERSATION REPORTED REFTEL. HE SAID THAT ADJUSTMENT OF THE WESTERN BORDER TO CONFORM TO MERIDIAN AND ARRANGEMENT REGARDING TERRITORIAL WATERS IN THE KEYS MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT HE WAS LESS INCLINED TO SUPPORT TRANSFER OF TERRITORY IN SOUTH TO THE MOHO RIVER LINE. LIKE ANY TOUGH NEGOTIATOR HE WOULD OF COURSE NOT WANT TO MAKE ANY TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS UNTIL THE ENTIRE SITUATION WAS BROUGHT TO THE BARGAINING TABLE AND THEN ONLY IF BELIZE AGREED.

6. ROEL SAID HE WAS NOT CONVINCED THAT NEXT PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THAN
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LAUGERUD, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS "FASCIST". AT SAME TIME, HE WAS CRITICAL OF TORRIJOS FOR URGING GUATEMALANS TO BE ADAMANT AND TO WAIT FOR RESULTS OF GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS.

7. ROEL DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH THE CONCEPT OF QUADRI-PARTITE NEGOTIATIONS, MAKING CLEAR THAT MEXICO WANTS TO BE INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATIONS OVER BELIZE AND TO BE SIGNATORY TO ANY SETTLEMENT. HE SAID THAT MEXICO DID NOT WANT ANY PART OF BELIZEAN TERRITORY, ALTHOUGH FREE MEXICAN ACCESS TO ITS PORT OF CHETUMAL WAS OF IMPORTANCE TO MEXICO AND WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED IN ANY OVERALL SETTLEMENT. IF QUADRI-PARTITE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE INITIATED, HE SAID, MEXICO WOULD BE WILLING TO FOREGO ITS OWN TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AND WOULD NOT BLOCK AN AGREEMENT INVOLVING CESSION (INCLUDING CESSION IN THE SOUTH, PRESUMABLY) PROVIDED THAT BELIZE AGREED TO IT. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, DEVELOP THE QUESTION OF WHAT MEXICO WOULD REGARD AS CONSTITUTING REAL BELIZEAN AGREEMENT.

8. FINALLY, ROEL SAID HE HOPED TO TALK TO CALLAGHAN OR OWEN ON THE GUATEMALAN-BELIZEAN QUESTION, INDICATING THAT SUCH CONVERSATION MIGHT TAKE PLACE SOON, BUT HE DID NOT

SPECIFY HOW OR WHERE. (THE BRITISH TELL US THAT THEY ARE PROPOSING A ROEL-ROWLANDS MEETING, PROBABLY IN NEW YORK, ON NOVEMBER 25 OR THEREABOUTS, ON RETURN LEG OF ROEL'S TRIP TO CANADA, ON WHICH HE IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE NOVEMBER 18. BRITISH SAY THAT DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED OF PLAN FOR THIS MEETING.) LUCEY

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